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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 3, 2000 LARSON UNVEILS LEGISLATION TO PRESERVE CONNECTICUT'S ROLE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

WETHERSFIELD (July 3) - On the eve of the country's Independence Day holiday, Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today unveiled a bill (H.R. 4794) he has introduced that will commission the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the 600-mile route that the troops of George Washington and French General Rochambeau traveled together to fight the British in Yorktown, Virginia, including the 11 sites in Connecticut where the French army camped. The study would identify the route's relationship to the American Revolutionary War, and how it can best be preserved.

The ultimate goal of the Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution is to have the route added to the National Park Service registry of historic places in time for the 225th anniversary of Washington and Rochambeau's march to Yorktown, which was the decisive battle in the American Revolution. The entire 600-mile route travels through Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia.

During the American Revolutionary battle of 1780, George Washington's army dwindled to less than 3,000 men and desperately needed assistance. Fortunately, 5,000 troops from the French expeditionary army landed in Newport, Rhode Island, led by General Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau to assist General Washington.

Larson became involved in the preservation of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route in February at the request of a constituent from Bolton, Hans DePold, who is the Bolton Town Historian. DePold asked Larson to take the lead in Congress on obtaining support for the preservation project from Members of Congress in other states along the route.

"The Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route is just another example of our state's rich history. As a former high school history teacher, I welcomed the opportunity to submit legislation that will commission a resource study by the National Park Service of the 600 miles traveled along the route. Certainly, a great deal of the credit for this preservation project must go to Bolton Town Historian, Hans DePold, who first brought his efforts to my attention in April."

The French Ambassador to the United States, Francois Bujon de l'Estang sent a letter of thanks to Larson for his legislative initiative and commended him for "paving the way to a proper commemoration of an important page of the shared history of our nations."

The site of the press conference, the Webb Deane Stevens Museum on Main Street in Wethersfield, was the location of one of the final meetings that Washington and Rochambeau had before traveling to Yorktown.

Joining Larson at today's announcement were representatives of the Connecticut Historical Commission, the Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Committee, and the Sons of the American Revolution.

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